

October 11, 2024: Words of Inspiration to Get out the Vote

...the voice of [one] crying in the wilderness...

I know these are words many folk of faith expect to hear at the beginning advent. But I grew up singing in church choir. This is the time of year we would be rehearsing, either to hear and support these words, or sing them ourselves, when their right season arrived. I heard and sang these words in children's choir, chancel choir, community choir, yet I never examined or questioned them.

At University, I came to a more visceral understanding of them. No, I did not go out into the desert to live, eating wild honey and locusts. I did begin speaking out about less than popular issues that were important to me. Unions were very much falling "out of fashion." I defended them in arguments with fellow students. It had only been four years since women had been given the right to choose how and when or if to become mothers. I defended the right of that choice as belonging to each individual woman. When I heard the words, "poor people always want something for nothing," I replied, "The poor have nothing and want something." And so it went on until I felt myself that voice, crying in a wilderness choked with brambles of unreason and uncaring.

Time passed. I encountered others like me, who were speaking out. Together, we consciously emulated the saint, who did outrageous, unprecedented things for holy purpose. The saint who pointed the way. The saint who poured water over the most hallowed head, and saying, "see! This one. Attend. Learn."

Speaking out for good cause is a holy habit. It is an ancient one as well: a pillar of sacred practice, as old as the first utterance of the first prophet. It will endure as sacred, far beyond our own endings.

We can reverence it in this present day, by crying out to any ear that hears, "VOTE! Vote for your life and the lives in your community. Vote, fixing your mind, your choices, on justice, and how to let it flow down like a mighty stream. Vote, with hope that will not let you NOT vote. Speak and do not be silent!

We can do this together. It is imperative we do so. Let it begin now.

Respectfully submitted, Rev. Laurel Mendes.